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Northwest Washington Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
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Soundings

Vol. 26, Issue 1 January 2010

Las Posadas At Bethany

Eyes young and old will be shining as brightly as the candles they hold when Bethany Lutheran on Bainbridge Island celebrates *Las Posadas* at 6 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 12.

The free event is a traditional Mexican re-enactment of Mary and Joseph's trials as they travel from Nazareth to Bethlehem in search of lodging and are eventually welcomed into comfort and security.

Youth lead the procession to different parts of the Bethany property where the crowd sings in Spanish "I beg you for lodging." They are told "Pues no puedo abrir" – 'I cannot open up for you.' When the procession reaches the church building they are recognized and welcomed to the warmth of the sanctuary with the joyful "Entren inmigrantes." Traditional carols are then sung in Spanish. The event is festive and ends with a traditional tamale dinner and potluck, and a piñata for the youth. The service is led by Pastor Eduardo Cabrera who started the New Jerusalem Lutheran congregation in Guatemala, and currently ministers to migrant workers at El Camino de Emaus in Burlington.

In historic Mexican tradition, "Las Posadas," represents the buildup to the Christmas event. For nine nights, beginning December 16 and finishing on the 24th, two children lead a winding procession of townspeople

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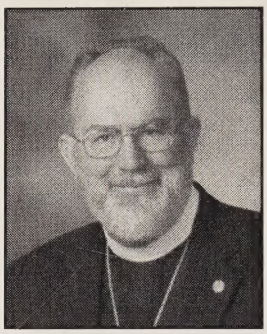
A Word From The Bishop



While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.

Act 13:2-3 NRSV

At the recent question and answer session on issues related to the Churchwide Assembly actions, I was asked if pastors who are conscience bound to not support the decisions made by that assembly would be marked negatively by the bishop or synod office in the call process. I responded that it would not and that the track record of this synod should demonstrate that. I was requested to put that response in writing. With that background I want to address the call process and how it continues to work in this synod.

The constitutions of the congregation give the authority to call a pastor, associate in ministry, diaconal minister or deaconess to the congregation. It requires a two thirds vote of a legally called meeting to issue a letter of call. There are several preliminary steps, but in the end it is only the congregation that can vote a letter of call.

The Synod Assembly in 2003 adopted a call policy statement. This document establishes the basic structure of the call process. Part of that process is that the congregation completes its ministry profile. That document describes the ministry of the congregation and the skills desired in the person to be called. The synod office uses that document to identify potential candidates to be interviewed by the call committee.

When the synod office brings names to be interviewed, it is our belief that these candidates match the

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A Word From The Bishop

ministry profile or we will withdraw the name from the list of those to be interviewed. There have been instances where after interviewing the call committee has changed the profile to be clearer in identifying the skills or attributes that they want in the person to be called.

There have been instances where the theological position of the potential candidate was expressed. In those instances we work to meet those expectations. This is a dynamic process. We are not always successful in identifying candidates the first time we try. Not every person interested in a particular call meets the profile request.

So, my response is that there is no penalty for a rostered leader speaking their conscience on this or other issues. We are a divided church on these and other issues. The synod office will seek to work with each congregation and each rostered leader so that we might build up the ministry of each congregation and the whole church.

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Deadline for copy of the February 2010 issue of Soundings is Wednesday, January 6. The current issue, and archived issues, can be found on the synod's website.

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$3700 Raised For World Hunger

Jesus, Justice, Jazz Concert

by Mark Jackson
Trinity Lutheran College

Youth and adults from as many as 15 Northwest Washington Synod churches were among the more than 300 participants that packed the Historic Everett Theatre for the *Jesus, Justice, Jazz Concert.* Christian artists David Scherer (Agape) and Rachel Kurtz were the featured performers at the concert, sponsored by Trinity Lutheran College and several area churches. More than $3,700 was given through a freewill offering to benefit the ELCA World Hunger Program.

Music included Christian rock, blues and rap. The theme *Jesus, Justice, Jazz* refers to the ELCA's Youth Gathering, held in July 2009 in New Orleans under the same name. Scherer and Kurtz were featured artists at the event, which focused on faith, service and justice and included community-wide service projects involving 36,000 participants.

Prior to the concert, about 75 youth and adults participated in service-related workshops, including *Mission Trips That Matter, Taking Root* (introduction to a comprehensive hunger education curriculum), and a global hunger awareness activity for youth.

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Las Posada

carrying candles to the door of the house assigned to the *Posada.* After symbolically asking for lodging at three different houses, only the third will allow them in. That will be the house where the *Posada* party is held for the evening.

The Bethany congregation has ties to the Latino community here, in Mexico and Guatemala. Throughout the year several services are held in Spanish and events are held as an outreach to the local Latino community.

For more information, contact Bethany Lutheran Church 206.842.4241 or Info@BethanyOfBainbridge.org.

Grant Applications Being Received

Is your congregation exploring a new direction for mission and ministry where a financial boost would help? Each year the Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission (EOCM) unit of the ELCA provides grants to about 100 growing congregations that are reaching out in new ways.

In the past few years, over $100,000 has been granted to congregations in our synod (this is mission support coming back into our synod to support our local efforts). For 2010 a new grant has been awarded to Our Redeemer's in Ballard as that congregation engages its neighborhood in new and creative ways.

If you would like to learn more about grant possibilities please contact Jerry Buss, our synod's Director for Evangelical Mission. He can be reached at the synod office or by calling 360-969-4220. March 1, 2010 is the deadline for grant applications for 2011 funding.

Will You Offer An Invitation?

Zhenchuan Liu leads the Ministry to Chinese Students and Scholars in Seattle (at the University of Washington and area community colleges). He would enjoy being invited to your congregation to tell about this exciting ministry. Please call Zhenchuan (pronounced Jen-shwan) at 425-691-8701 to set a date.

Also, the December holiday time provides an opportunity to invite a student or scholar to your home while they are on break. Inviting one or more for dinner on a day between Christmas and New Year's would be wonderful—these are delightful and well-educated young adults (many have a PhD and are professors in Chinese universities) who are a joy to meet. Call Zhenchuan at 425-691-8701 to offer this invitation. Thank you.

LPPO Update

by The Rev. Paul Benz

lppointern@lcsnw.org
206-464-4133;
www.lppowa.org.

Well the 2009 elections for our state are over. We have have been breathing a sigh of relief of not having to see any more TV campaign ads or receive any more campaign calls or mail – at least for the next several months.

Now the hard work of governing takes place and we as people of faith need to continue to pray for and raise our voices with the newly elected and those who continue to serve us to help alleviate hunger, poverty, homelessness, and create a cleaner, more sustainable environment.

In our synod we have a new mayor in Seattle and a new county executive. In Everett the incumbent mayor continues as well as the Snohomish county council members that were up for election.

The two statewide election issues – Initiative 1033 was defeated (this was the effort to limit local and state government's ability to raise revenue) and Referendum 71 was approved (the state law that extends marital rights to same sex partners and heterosexual partners over 62 that are registered with the state).

The state legislature convenes on Jan. 11 – please keep them and our governor in your prayers as they will face a $2 billion plus revenue shortfall.

The governor released her balanced budget on Dec. 8. (It's posted on the LPPO website.) Out of a $31 billion total state budget $21.5 billion is "untouchable" or mandated by the federal government or by our state constitution (such as Medicaid and K-12 education).

This meant she and the legislature had to cut from the other $9.5 billion, which are health and human service programs and the Department of Corrections.

The governor and the legislature have no easy task ahead of them.

Q&A With Bishop

by The Rev. Ron Marshall

First Lutheran Church of West Seattle

About 90 people showed up for a meeting with Bishop Boerger at Prince of Peace in Everett on November 14 to discuss the topic of the sexuality decisions made at the ELCA Churchwide Assembly August 2009.

While there were some emotional moments during the meeting, everyone conducted themselves in a polite and civil manner. Many questions were asked of the bishop on how one could stay in the ELCA when one thinks these decisions on homosexuality were against Biblical principles. Bishop Boerger gave many suggestions how one might do that. He also advised against putting this matter to a vote for fear of splitting congregations. He assured everyone that congregations would not be forced in any way to call a pastor they did not want. He further said that pastors who oppose these controversial decisions would not be discriminated against in the call process -- for being against the ELCA decision.

Bishop Boerger reported that the conference of bishops is still working on a satifactory process for advancing pastors in gay relationships to serve in our congregations. When asked whether or not pastors in gay relationships would be expected to declare to congregations their preference, he said they would be.

Early in the meeting Bishop Boerger responded to a question saying that he did not believe these decisions put the ELCA is direct violation of the Bible. He explained that just as Acts 15 overturned the necessity of circumcision in Genesis 17, so the ELCA has justifiably overturned the sinfulness of homosexual behavior as stated in Leviticus 18 and Romans 1 -- at least as it pertains to gays in committed, loving relationships. Bishop Boerger also said he would be happy to visit our congregations to discuss further any of these matters. At the end of the session it was still very clear how wide and deep the divide is between the opposing views on this matter in the church.

A Christmas Wish List

This Christmas Season, consider opening your heart and home to a child in need. If you are not able to be a foster parent right now, but still want to help, take a look at our Christmas Wish List:

- New toddler-size car seats (new car seats are required for safety reasons).
- An acoustic 6-string guitar for a newly arrived Guatemalan boy who wants to learn to play.
- Tickets, passes or gift cards for local family friendly events or restaurants.
- Laptop computers for high school students in our Refugee Children's Program.

If you need more information please contact Lutheran Community Services Northwest Children's Programs; 206.694.5713; email ahixson@lcsnw.org; or visit www.lcsnw.org/fosterparent.html.

Wheat Ridge Awards Grants

www.wheatridge.org.

Wheat Ridge Ministries recently approved eight grants totaling $251,800 to assist new ministries of health and hope throughout the world.

One of the grant recipients was from Seattle: Lutheran Peace Fellowship. The grant is for their program called Lutherans and the Hungry Poor. They received $9,300. Faith-based efforts to alleviate hunger and poverty continue to be challenged due to increasing need and decreasing resources. Lutheran Peace Fellowship plans to help address this problem by providing workshops, resources and support to strengthen and expand a crucial element in Lutheran hunger programs – the core volunteers and leaders. The goal is to assist, encourage and offer skill training to volunteers in food programs to help them grow in their leadership and commitment. Additionally, they plan to support volunteers in sharing their experience and commitment and to increase participation in hunger efforts.

Upcoming Events

Extravaganza 2010

The 2010 Extravaganza is scheduled for February 4-8 in Charlotte, North Carolina. The event draws more than 500 adults, pastors and lay, who work with youth in congregations of the ELCA. The event is organized by ELCA Youth Ministry Network. For more information visit www.elcaymnet.org.

Spring Bishop's Convocation

The one day Spring Bishop's Convocation will be Wednesday, April 21, 2010 at St. Luke's Lutheran Church of Bellevue. Our speaker will be Professor Cynthia Moe-Lobeda. More information to come. Please plan on attending this event and make time for learning, collegiality, worship and a delicious lunch.

Faith Advocacy Day

Faith Advocacy Day will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 16, at the State Capitol in Olympia. The day will begin at United Churches in Olympia and then move to the State Capitol for lunch and legislative meetings. If you attend you will meet your legislators and voice your concerns. Registration materials will be available in December. For more information, contact one of the primary sponsors: Washington Association of Churches (206) 625-9790; the Lutheran Public Policy Office (206) 464-4133; or the Church Council of Greater Seattle (206) 525-1213

PLU Sunday

Join with the Office of Congregation Relations at Pacific Lutheran University in support of Lutheran higher education by designating Sunday, Feb. 7, as PLU Sunday. Call or email for more information, or to say, "Yes! We want to participate in the Region 1 PLU Sunday on February 7." The telephone number is 253-535-7423 and the email address is crel@plu.edu.

Here 'n There

- In the summer of 2010 the fourth delegation of youth from the NE Seattle partner churches **(Faith, Maple Leaf, Prince of Peace and University)** will head to Ailanga Lutheran Junior Seminary in Usa River, Tanzania. The youth are currently busy raising funds to support this mission outreach project. Past delegations have raised funds that helped the school to build dormitory space, a science lab and a computer lab. Some school scholarship money has also been raised.
- **University Lutheran in Seattle** was part of the U Distric Conversation on Homelessness held in November. The conversation included a mixture of people from the faith community, civic community and business community. Discussions centered around how services with homeless people can be better coordinated throughout the University District as well as how to advocate for these individuals at a city and county level.
- The Sky Valley Food Bank has recently been providing enough food each month for more than 50,000 meals. **Morning Star in Monroe** supports the food bank.
- **Bethany Lutheran on Bainbridge Island** held a humor fundraiser to raise funds for LATCH. Besides having a lot of fun more than $1300 was raised. The congregation also recently held a Fair Trade Fair where more than $3000 was raised to address poverty world-wide by providing sustainable wages for artisans' families.
- **At Holy Spirit in Kirkland** the confirmation program is focusing on service. In October the confirmation class put learning into action as 18 students and their adult leaders dined with Tent City residents.
- In October members of **Nativity in Renton** provided more than 200 pairs of socks for Operation Nightwatch's *Sock It To The Homeless* fall ingathering of socks nad articles for the homeless population of Seattle.

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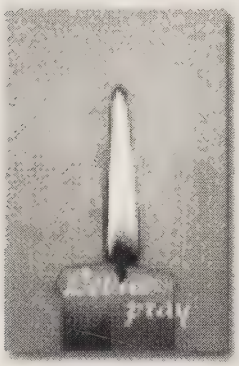
Here 'n There

- In November the Sunday School children and WELCA from **St. Peter in Clinton** prepared 20 Health Kits to be sent overseas as part of the Fall Pacific Northwest Ingathering of Kits for Lutheran World Relief.
- In January members of **Faith in Redmond** will be providing dinners on two separate nights for homeless men who are able to stay at Redmond Methodist Church. The church provides a warm place for them to sleep and the kitchen facilities for them to make breakfast and lunch with donated provisions. Faith is just one of many churches who provide dinners to the men.
- The Sunday School classes at **Our Savior's in Stanwood** are using their offerings from December to be used for *God's Global Barnyard*. So far they have collected enough money for one pig and a flock of chickens.
- **Central in Seattle** has received a $10,000 grant from Seattle Public Utilities to remodel their parish hall. Central received the grant because the congregation is part of a project to rescue food from the waste stream in Seattle. It is estimated that one third of all waste in Seattle is from food. Since Community Lunch (a program at Central) receives food from restaurants and supermarkets and they estimate that they recover 96 tons of food each year.
- **Trinity in Freeland** supports the homeless in Seattle through meals, clothing and other items. In late October they were able to feed 100 people a lunch and give some much needed, and appreciated, clothes and quilts.
- Duck the malls and join **Church of the Beloved** for an evening of holiday celebration hosted by a few talented artists and crafters. Light refreshments will be served while you listen to live music. The bazaar will take place on Friday, Dec. 18, from 3:30 to 8:30 pm at the Rosewood Manor, Lynnwood. Ten percent of all sales will be donated to charitable causes. For more info contact Ryan Marsh at 206-356-7976.

Within Our Family



We continue To Hold In Our Prayers:

† **The Rev. Sai Wai (Paul) Cheung,** Grace Chinese, Seattle

† **The Rev. John Ericksen** and his wife, Marita

† **The Rev. Paul Wuest**

† **The Rev. Mikkel Hustad,** St. Peter, Clinton

† **Richard Bridges**, former member of Synod Council

† **The Rev. Phil Petrasek**

We Pray For:

† **The family of Mildred Brents, mother of Pastor Scott Brents.** Mildred passed away on October 19. Scott was with her. A service celebrating her life was held at Trinity Lutheran Church in San Gabriel, CA. Cards may be sent to: Scott Brents, Camano Lutheran, 850 N Heichel Road, Camano Island WA 98282.

† **The family of Alice Rundstrom, widow of the Rev. G. B. Rundstrom and grandmother of the Rev. Lisa Dahlen.** Alice died peacefully at her home in Everett on Nov. 17. Alice turned 100 years old in June. A memorial service was held on November 21 at Central in Everett. Cards may be sent to: Lisa Dahlen, 939 N 105th St Unit B, Seattle WA 98133.

† **The family of Ruth La Von Pierson, widow of the Rev. Paul Pierson.** Ruth died on November 21. La Von was a beloved founding member of St Luke's in Bellevue and will be sorely missed. The family plans a memorial service at 2 pm on Sunday, December 27 at St Luke's. Cards may be sent to the family in care of: St Luke's Lutheran Church, 330 Bellevue Way NE, Bellevue WA 98004-1978 .

† **The family of Emma Anderson, mother of the Rev.**

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Paul D. Anderson, Interim at Fir Conway. Emma died in Kennewick on November 28. Cards may be sent to: Paul Anderson, Fir-Conway Lutheran Church, 18101 Fir Island Road, Mount Vernon, WA 98273.

Within Our Family

† **The family of the Rev. Karsten Baalson (ret.)** Karsten died peacefully on November 26 at Skagit Valley Hospital. He was preceded in death by his wife Bernell and his remains will travel by train to North Dakota to be laid to rest next to her in the spring. Karsten was beloved by his family and leaves them with many joyful memories. A service will be held at Kerns Funeral Home, 1122 S 3rd St, Mount Vernon, WA, on Tuesday, December 16th. Cards may be sent via his niece at: Karen Haucks, 17031 Laveview Blvd, Mount Vernon, WA 98274.

† **The Rev. K. G. Egertson (ret.)** was hospitalized recently with a blood clot in the brain, had surgery and is now doing well. Pastor Egertson is at a nursing home in the Mount Vernon area for physical therapy before he returns home. Cards may be sent to him at 2610 Club Court #98, Mount Vernon WA 98273.

† **The Rev. Joel Lohafer, pastor at Hope in Lynden,** is in Iowa to be with his father Walter Lohafer who is in guarded condition at this time. Please keep Joel and his family in your prayers. Cards may be sent to Pastor Lohafer at Hope Lutheran, 900 E Grover St, Lynden WA 98264-1628.

† **The Rev. Chauncey Christofferson (ret.)** is recovering from surgery. He is 97 years old. Cards may be sent to: 9901 - 272nd Place NW, Stanwood, WA 98292-7449

† **The Rev. Paul Cheung, Grace Chinese of Sammamish Hills,** is undergoing chemotherapy. Cards may be sent via Pastor Jimmy Hao at: Grace Chinese Lutheran Church 538 NE 127th, Seattle, WA 98125.

Northwest Washington Synod Transitions		
	Location/Event	Effective Date
Installations		
Paul Stumme-Diers	Bethany, Bainbridge	11/15/2009
Deaths		
Karsten Baalson	Mount Vernon, WA	11/26/2009
Ruth LaVon Pierson	Widow, the Rev. Paul Pierson	11/21/2009
Alice Rundstrom	Widow, the Rev. G. B. Rundstrom	11/17/2009
Transfers in/out of Synod		
George Brunjes	From Metro New York Synod	11/1/2009
Paul D. Anderson (ret.)	From Eastern Washington/Idaho Synod	11/15/2009

From the Board of Pensions
Update

What's two percent?

Your congregation or organization's ELCA health contribution will increase two percent in 2010. Two percent also happens to be what your congregation or organization could save on these contributions in 2010 if your synod collectively reaches 65% Mayo Clinic Health Assessment participation Jan. 1 - April 30. Earning the two percent contribution discount in 2010 will effectively offset your rate increase for 2010. Encourage your employees with ELCA-primary health benefits to take the health assessment when it opens on the EmbodyHealth web portal Jan. 1. It's an act of stewardship for this church. (And your employees earn a $150 personal wellness account credit in the process.)

Flexible Spending Plan (FSA)

Employees with ELCA-primary health coverage who want a 2010 flexible spending account should return the enrollment form (signed by you). Final deadline, faxed or post-marked, is Dec. 31.

Editor's Note: For the most up-to-date listing of transitions and mobility please visit the synod's website at www.lutheransnw.org/leadership/transitions.asp. That website page is updated weekly, when necessary.

Northwest Washington Synod Mobility

In Call Process	Position	Status	Current, Interim/Supply Pastor
Arlington, Our Saviour	PR	TR	Marillyn Schultz Rothermel, Interim
Bellevue, Saint Andrew's	A/SP	P	Jim McEachran, Pastor
Bothell, First Evangelical	PR	TR	Doug Stensby, Interim
Bothell, Light of the Cross	PR	TR	Cindy Salo, Interim
Burlington, Burlington	PR	P	Michael Swain, Interim
Des Moines, Grace	A/SP	TR	John O'Neal, Pastor; Mitch Watney, Interim Associate
Everett, Zion	PR	TR	Michael Ross, Interim
Ferndale, Christ	PR	NV	Chris Anderson, Interim
Issaquah, Shepherd of the Hills	PR	I	Martha Myers, Interim
Mount Vernon, Fir Conway	PR	NV	Paul D. Anderson, Interim
Mount Vernon, First Evangelical	PR	I	Linda Larson, Interim
Oak Harbor, Oak Harbor	PR	TR	Karen Hanson, Interim
Renton, Lord of Life	PR	TR	Phil Reitz, Interim
Seattle, Faith	PR	TR	Red Burchfield, Interim
Seattle, Gethsemane	PR	TR	Maynard Atik, Interim
Seattle, St Paul's of Shorewood	PR	TR	Supply
Stanwood, Freeborn	PR	NV	Supply

Mobility Position Key:
PR = Pastor
A = Associate
AIM = Associate in Ministry
DM = Diaconal Minister
A/SP = Associate with Special Emphasis contact Synod Office)

Mobility Status Key:
I = Interviewing
C = Calling
NV = New Vacancy
V = Vacancy
SC = Synod Call
TR = Transition process
P = Profile presented (receiving nominations)
TR/DO = Div for Outreach Transformation Process